

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An image forming apparatus that can  
5 include a plurality of applications, the image forming  
apparatus comprising:

a displaying part displaying a screen used  
for selecting an application on an operation display  
part of the image forming apparatus; and

10 an assigning part assigning a selected  
application that is selected on the screen to a  
function key when the function key is pushed for the  
selected application;

wherein the function key is a key used for a  
15 user to select and execute an application from a  
plurality of applications.

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2. The image forming apparatus as claimed in  
claim 1, wherein the function key is a hardware key.

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3. The image forming apparatus as claimed in  
claim 1, wherein the function key is a software key  
that is displayed on the operation display part of the  
5 image forming apparatus.

10 4. The image forming apparatus as claimed in  
claim 1, wherein assignment by the assigning part is  
performed when the image forming apparatus is in a mode  
for assigning the selected application to the function  
key.

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5. The image forming apparatus as claimed in  
20 claim 1, wherein, when assignment of the selected  
application is performed, the image forming apparatus  
displays a guidance screen indicating an operation of  
the function key on the operation display part of the  
image forming apparatus.

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6. The image forming apparatus as claimed in  
5 claim 5, wherein the guidance screen includes an image  
of an operation panel of the image forming apparatus  
and an image for guiding a user to the function key.

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7. The image forming apparatus as claimed in  
claim 1, wherein, when assignment of the selected  
application is performed, the image forming apparatus  
15 displays a screen indicating the number of applications  
assigned to the function key.

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8. The image forming apparatus as claimed in  
claim 7, wherein, when the function key is pushed for  
the selected application, the image forming apparatus  
displays a screen indicating that the function key  
25 cannot be assigned to the selected application if the

number of applications assigned to the function key  
already reaches a limit number.

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9. The image forming apparatus as claimed in  
claim 1, the assigning part including:

a part obtaining a function key ID  
10 corresponding to the pushed function key; and  
a part storing an application ID of the  
selected application and the obtained function key ID  
in which the application ID is associated with the  
function key ID.

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10. The image forming apparatus as claimed in  
20 claim 9, wherein, in addition to the function key ID,  
the image forming apparatus stores extension key IDs  
for identifying a plurality of applications assigned to  
the function key.

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11. The image forming apparatus as claimed in  
claim 1, wherein, when a function key to which a  
5 plurality of applications are assigned is pushed, the  
image forming apparatus displays a screen including the  
names of the plurality of applications for a user to  
select one application from the plurality of  
applications.

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12. The image forming apparatus as claimed in  
15 claim 11, wherein the image forming apparatus displays  
application status for each of the plurality of  
applications.

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13. The image forming apparatus as claimed in  
claim 1, wherein the image forming apparatus selects  
one application from a plurality of applications  
25 according to a number of times a user pushes a function

key to which the plurality of applications are assigned within a time period.

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14. The image forming apparatus as claimed in claim 10, wherein the image forming apparatus selects one application from a plurality of applications in which the one application corresponds to an extension key ID that is the same as a number of times a user pushes the function key to which the plurality of applications are assigned within a time period.

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15. A method used for assigning an application to a function key in an image forming apparatus that can include a plurality of applications, the method comprising the steps of:

displaying a screen used for selecting an application on an operation display part of the image forming apparatus; and  
25 assigning a selected application that is

selected on the screen to a function key when the  
function key is pushed for the selected application;

wherein the function key is a key used for a  
user to select and execute an application from a  
5 plurality of applications.

10 16. The method as claimed in claim 15,  
wherein the function key is a hardware key.

15 17. The method as claimed in claim 15,  
wherein the function key is a software key that is  
displayed on the operation display part of the image  
forming apparatus.

20 18. The method as claimed in claim 15,  
25 wherein the step of assigning is performed when the

image forming apparatus is in a mode for assigning the selected application to the function key.

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19. The method as claimed in claim 15,  
wherein, when assignment of the selected application is performed, the image forming apparatus displays a  
10 guidance screen indicating an operation of the function key on the operation display part of the image forming apparatus.

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20. The method as claimed in claim 19,  
wherein the guidance screen includes an image of an operation panel of the image forming apparatus and an  
20 image for guiding a user to the function key.

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21. The method as claimed in claim 15,



wherein, when assignment of the selected application is performed, the image forming apparatus displays a screen indicating the number of applications assigned to the function key.

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22. The method as claimed in claim 21,  
10 wherein, when the function key is pushed for the selected application, the image forming apparatus displays a screen indicating that the function key cannot be assigned to the selected application if the number of applications assigned to the function key  
15 already reaches a limit number.

20 23. The method as claimed in claim 15, wherein, in the step of assigning, the image forming apparatus obtains a function key ID corresponding to the pushed function key; and stores an application ID of the selected application and the obtained function  
25 key ID in which the application ID is associated with

the function key ID.

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24. The method as claimed in claim 23,  
wherein, in addition to the function key ID, the image  
forming apparatus stores extension key IDs for  
identifying a plurality of applications assigned to the  
10 function key.

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25. The method as claimed in claim 15,  
wherein, when a function key to which a plurality of  
applications are assigned is pushed, the image forming  
apparatus displays a screen including the names of the  
plurality of applications for a user to select one  
20 application from the plurality of applications.

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26. The method as claimed in claim 25,

wherein the image forming apparatus displays  
application status for each of the plurality of  
applications.

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27. The method as claimed in claim 15,  
wherein the image forming apparatus selects one  
10 application from a plurality of applications according  
to a number of times a user pushes a function key to  
which the plurality of applications are assigned within  
a time period.

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28. The method as claimed in claim 24,  
wherein the image forming apparatus selects one  
20 application from a plurality of applications in which  
the one application corresponds to an extension key ID  
that is the same as a number of times a user pushes the  
function key to which the plurality of applications are  
assigned within a time period.

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29. A computer program for causing an image  
5 forming apparatus to assign an application to a  
function key, in which the image forming apparatus can  
include a plurality of applications, the computer  
program comprising:

displaying program code means for displaying  
10 a screen used for selecting an application on an  
operation display part of the image forming apparatus;  
and

assigning program code means for assigning a  
selected application that is selected on the screen to  
15 a function key when the function key is pushed for the  
selected application;

wherein the function key is a key used for a  
user to select and execute an application from a  
plurality of applications.

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30. The computer program as claimed in claim  
25 29, wherein the function key is a hardware key.

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29, wherein the function key is a software key that is  
displayed on the operation display part of the image  
forming apparatus.

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                  32. The computer program as claimed in claim  
29, wherein assignment by the assigning program code  
15 means is performed when the image forming apparatus is  
in a mode for assigning the selected application to the  
function key.

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                  33. The computer program as claimed in claim  
29, wherein the assigning program code means displays a  
guidance screen indicating an operation of the function  
25 key on the operation display part of the image forming

apparatus.

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34. The computer program as claimed in claim 33, wherein the guidance screen includes an image of an operation panel of the image forming apparatus and an image for guiding a user to the function key.

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35. The computer program as claimed in claim 29, wherein the assigning program code means displays a screen indicating the number of applications assigned to the function key.

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36. The computer program as claimed in claim 35, wherein the assigning program code means displays a screen indicating that the function key cannot be assigned to the selected application if the number of

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applications assigned to the function key already  
reaches a limit number.

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37. The computer program as claimed in claim  
29, the assigning program code means including:

program code means for obtaining a function  
10 key ID corresponding to the pushed function key; and  
program code means for storing an application  
ID of the selected application and the obtained  
function key ID in which the application ID is  
associated with the function key ID.

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38. The computer program as claimed in claim  
20 37, wherein, in addition to the function key ID, the  
assigning program code means stores extension key IDs  
for identifying a plurality of applications assigned to  
the function key.

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39. The computer program as claimed in claim  
29, the computer program further comprising displaying  
5 program code means for, when a function key to which a  
plurality of applications are assigned is pushed,  
displaying a screen including the names of the  
plurality of applications for a user to select one  
application from the plurality of applications.

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40. The computer program as claimed in claim  
15 39, wherein the displaying program code means displays  
application status for each of the plurality of  
applications.

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41. The computer program as claimed in claim  
29, the computer program further comprising program  
code means for selecting one application from a  
25 plurality of applications according to a number of



times a user pushes a function key to which the plurality of applications are assigned within a time period.

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42. The computer program as claimed in claim 38, the computer program further comprising program code means for selecting one application from a plurality of applications in which the one application corresponds to an extension key ID that is the same as a number of times a user pushes the function key to which the plurality of applications are assigned within a time period.

20 43. A computer readable medium storing a computer program for causing an image forming apparatus to assign an application to a function key, in which the image forming apparatus can include a plurality of applications, the computer program comprising:

25 displaying program code means for displaying

a screen used for selecting an application on an  
operation display part of the image forming apparatus;  
and

assigning program code means for assigning a  
5 selected application that is selected on the screen to  
a function key when the function key is pushed for the  
selected application;

wherein the function key is a key used for a  
user to select and execute an application from a  
10 plurality of applications.

15 44. The computer readable medium as claimed  
in claim 43, wherein the function key is a hardware key.

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45. The computer readable medium as claimed  
in claim 43, wherein the function key is a software key  
that is displayed on the operation display part of the  
image forming apparatus.

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46. The computer readable medium as claimed  
5 in claim 43, wherein assignment by the assigning  
program code means is performed when the image forming  
apparatus is in a mode for assigning the selected  
application to the function key.

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47. The computer readable medium as claimed  
in claim 43, wherein the assigning program code means  
15 displays a guidance screen indicating an operation of  
the function key on the operation display part of the  
image forming apparatus.

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48. The computer readable medium as claimed  
in claim 47, wherein the guidance screen includes an  
image of an operation panel of the image forming  
25 apparatus and an image for guiding a user to the

function key.

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49. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 43, wherein the assigning program code means displays a screen indicating the number of applications assigned to the function key.

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50. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 49, wherein the assigning program code means displays a screen indicating that the function key cannot be assigned to the selected application if the number of applications assigned to the function key already reaches a limit number.

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51. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 43, the assigning program code means

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including:

program code means for obtaining a function  
key ID corresponding to the pushed function key; and

program code means for storing an application  
5 ID of the selected application and the obtained  
function key ID in which the application ID is  
associated with the function key ID.

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52. The computer readable medium as claimed  
in claim 51, wherein, in addition to the function key  
ID, the assigning program code means stores extension  
15 key IDs for identifying a plurality of applications  
assigned to the function key.

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53. The computer readable medium as claimed  
in claim 43, the computer program further comprising  
displaying program code means for, when a function key  
to which a plurality of applications are assigned is  
25 pushed, displaying a screen including the names of the

plurality of applications for a user to select one application from the plurality of applications.

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54. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 53, wherein the displaying program code means displays application status for each of the plurality  
10 of applications.

15 55. The computer readable medium as claimed in claim 43, the computer program further comprising program code means for selecting one application from a plurality of applications according to a number of times a user pushes a function key to which the  
20 plurality of applications are assigned within a time period.

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56. The computer readable medium as claimed  
in claim 52, the computer program further comprising  
program code means for selecting one application from a  
plurality of applications in which the one application  
5 corresponds to an extension key ID that is the same as  
a number of times a user pushes the function key to  
which the plurality of applications are assigned within  
a time period.

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